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Update on Human Development Report consultations

1. In January 2003, during its 57th session, the General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/57/264, in which it invited the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA to include in its annual work plan as from 2003 a separate agenda item on the *Human Development Report* (HDR). The aim of the resolution is to improve the consultation process with Member States in order to enhance the quality and accuracy of the HDR without compromising its editorial independence.

2. In line with that resolution, the actions undertaken to improve the quality of consultations with Member States and with the community of human development practitioners at large are detailed below. The present narrative covers the consultation that took place to choose the theme of HDR 2007; the informal Executive Board consultations carried on throughout the elaboration process; and some specific capacity-building efforts in the area of statistics to support countries and regions in enhancing the quality of their statistical work.

3. Following the usual practice, in 2006, the Human Development Report Office (HDRO) held a special network consultation to choose the theme for HDR 2007. The discussion, launched by the Director of HDRO, was hosted over the course of a month on the UNDP resident representatives' network (RRNet) and the Human Development Report network (HDRNet). HDRNet is free and open to all human development practitioners who wish to join. It encompasses about 1,200 subscribers around the world. Representatives of a few Member States expressed a willingness to participate in the network discussion to choose the theme of HDR 2007. Their names were added to HDRNet to allow them to follow the network discussion closely and cast their vote. The network discussion featured interesting contributions. The theme of climate change received the most support among those who contributed to the network discussion, and the topic selected for HDR 2007 was 'human development and climate change'. The network discussion was also helpful in identifying pertinent issues to be addressed by the report. In addition, a network discussion was launched on the concept note of the report. The insightful comments received helped frame the content of HDR 2007.

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4. During the elaboration process, HDRO held five informal consultations with the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA. The first took place on 15 December 2006, focusing on the concept note for the 2007 report. At the second, held on 8 March 2007, the chapter outline of HDR 2007 was presented and discussed. The third, a thematic consultation on statistics, took place on 13 April 2007, and focused on statistical capacity-building and support to countries and regions, an area where HDRO is stepping up its efforts. That consultation also constituted an opportunity to discuss the quality and reliability of the statistics used in the global HDR and, in general, the statistical work carried out by HDRO. The fourth informal consultation, which took place on May 2007, focused on the detailed chapter structure, which had undergone revisions following consultations within HDRO, with the expert advisory panel on the report, and with the UNDP readers' group. The fifth and final informal consultation covered the main messages of HDR 2007.

5. The consultations so far have been well attended by Executive Board members and observers. Several delegates thanked HDRO for organizing the consultations, which were characterized as very useful. Throughout the year delegates demonstrated a keen interest on the subject. They commended the work on climate change undertaken by the HDRO, and expressed strong support for the editorial independence of the report. HDRO benefited in particular from constructive comments made by the delegates on how to link climate change and human development. Those comments and suggestions have been taken into consideration in preparing HDR 2007.

6. HDRO is committed to the preparation of the HDR in a neutral, transparent manner and in full and effective consultation with Member States, with due regard to the use of resources and the impartial nature of the report.